

Usain nearly bolted when he came face-to-face with cheetah

When the world's fastest man came face to face with the fastest beast in the animal kingdom, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt threatened to do a runner.

Confronted by a full-grown female cheetah named Sharon at an animal orphanage in Kenya, Bolt backed off.

It was only after athletics equipment tycoon Jochen Zeitz had stood next to the cheetah and reassured him that she was harmless that the 100 and 200 metres world record holder could be persuaded to pose with her for a photoshoot with the Kenyan prime minister Raila Odinga.

But a few minutes later Bolt was all smiles as he agreed to a less threatening proposition - adopting a three-month-old cheetah cub which had been abandoned by its mother.

The fastest man in the world held the fuzzy-headed male cub on his arm and fed it a bottle of milk as he posed for the cameras at an animal orphanage in Nairobi.

Camerasmen teased Bolt over the earlier incident, asking him if he was afraid of cheetahs.

"Yes, I was, but not anymore," Bolt replied, cradling the cub that he said he would name Lightning Bolt.

The Jamaican sprinter appeared to harbour no ill feelings that a cheetah stole his laurels earlier this year, when a middle-aged female called Sarah set a new speed record for all land mammals, running 100 metres in 6.13 seconds - more than three seconds faster than Bolt's own world record of 9.58 seconds.

He paid \$13,700 to formally adopt the cub, and promised a further \$3,000 a year in care fees.

Bolt was joined on the trip by Colin Jackson, the former 110-metre hurdles Olympic champion turned BBC Sports presenter and Strictly Come Dancing contestant, who adopted a two-year-old eland, the largest of the antelope species.

The money will go to the Kenya Wildlife Service, and some will be used to protect Kenya's endangered species, KWS director Julius Kipngetich said.

The visit to the animal orphanage was organised by Mr Zeitz, the chief executive of Puma, who was launching a charity campaign to preserve ecosystems.

Lightning Bolt is among three cubs rescued by KWS officials after their mother abandoned them in a game park. Kenyan wildlife is threatened by trophy hunting, climate change and human encroachment. - timesonline.co.uk